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NRO review(s) completed.

CORONA Management

20 July 1964

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Memo to DCI from ADWheelon
Subj: Perspective on [] and the CORONA Program

.....When the CORONA program was initiated, it was decided that the effective Air Force/CIA partnership in U-2 operations could be carried over into space by "relying on the breadth and depth of technical and management experience available in the Air Force". Accordingly, the ten man Program 162 office was set up to control Lockheed and the payload contractors on a day-to-day basis, reserving for Bissell the monthly program decisions.

.....The initial flight program in 1959 and 1960 of 13 flights was a total shambles and everyone agreed something more needed to be done. [] was brought in on a clandestine basis to diagnose the flights but Lockheed would not accept them in the SETD role. Charyk then suggested that a separate element of Lockheed itself might perform the systems engineering

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Cover

See
B. White
memo
attached.

function, doing analysis for the 162 office which would
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allow it to make better judgments about the AGENA and
payload. This role has gone down hill in a predictable
way, since it is almost impossible for the contractor
and architect to have common financial interests without
prejudice to the customer. In any case, the function now
being performed by Lockheed under its SETD contract is not
adequate to support the AF in the way they need to be
supported considering their own lack of qualified personnel.

Wheelon's opinion about AF desire to bring in
~~xxxxxx~~ to perform SETD for CORONA:

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I have been thoroughly convinced for the past year that
CIA could do a much better job of managing the CORONA
payload program. The Air Force need to bring in
only convinces me of this view.

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COR

COR-0756 Wm Burke ,AC/DPD to DDCI sub: Backgrnd
4 Feb 1960 of the DISC. Series

PROBLEMS:

Continuing camera difficulties centered around the stresses encountered in ascent and the extreme environmental conditions on orbit. These were difficult to simulate in the laboratory and there were problems with film tearing and camera jamming. Intensive research eliminated many of the possible causes of camera and film failure and improved the confidence factor as 1960 program continued.

Recovery problems (retro-rocket failures, battery failures, loss of stabilization) also received intense analysis and an all-out effort toward improved performance.

The failures of 1959-60, while extremely costly, were valuable in adding to the knowledge of the program's managers X in this field in which they were pioneering. Some of the lessons learned in the DISCOVERER series were also applicable to, and made use of by, other satellite

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